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Title: Regarding devolution of funds to both Mandal and Zila Parishads.

SHRI RAM MOHAN NAIDU KINJARAPU (SRIKAKULAM): I want to raise a matter of grave concern. Post the 14th Finance Commision Report, there has been a spate of decentralization, with the Government prioritizing Gram Panchayats over the Mandal and Zila Parishads with respect to funding. The Government's move to empower Gram Panchayats directly is a well-intentioned one that aims at breathing life into the concept of decentralized governance should but it must not be forgotten that all 3 tiers of Panchayati Raj governance should work seamlessly together, and individually, to undertake a great deal of developmental work in the states.

These Mandal and Zila Parishads have clearly demarcated responsibilities as laid out in our constitution under the 73 and 74th Constitutional Amendments, and their representatives are chosen by way of elections. The advent of the 14th Finance Commission leading to direct devolution of funds to Gram Panchayats has made these two tiers idle.

While the Gram Panchayats are primarily concerned with the needs of their respective villages, the works undertaken by Mandal & Zila Parishads are at the macro level, taking into account the needs of a much larger number of people. Further, these top tiers, specifically the Zila Parishads are directly responsible for negotiating and discussing works with the State Government. Their experienced oversight and advice allows for development to happen in a holistic, efficient, and organized fashion. It is a fact that it is through the Blocks that the Districts prosper.

In Andhra Pradesh, Zila and Mandal Parishads have played a crucial role in sanctioning and implementing large scale water and road works, amongst others. The present deprivation of funding will derail many similar large scale developmental projects being carried out under their oversight. This is especially difficult given how cash strapped the economy of newly bifurcated Andhra Pradesh is.

In the light of the above, I urge the Union government to take cognizance of this matter and amend the recommendations of 14th Finance Commission at the earliest to pave way for devolution of funds to both Mandal and Zila Parishads, in addition to those being provided to Gram Panchayats.